



# **SPOTLIGHT ON YUGOSLAVIA**

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**DEDICATED TO**

**THE "FREE YUGOSLAV" ASSOCIATION OF  
YUGOSLAVS IN GREAT BRITAIN**

**Who first published this pamphlet in Britain**

**&**

**THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE  
YUGOSLAV MERCHANT NAVY**

**Whose magnificent contributions from their hard-earned  
wages made possible the publication of this pamphlet  
in Britain.**

## PREFATORY NOTE

This documented record of the situation in Yugoslavia gives a clear and accurate picture of the way in which the liberation movement has grown. Today all the world recognises that it is the National Liberation Movement that represents the people of Yugoslavia, that Mihailovich is a traitor and that the emigre Yugoslav Government represents nobody but itself. Reading this pamphlet, however, will help all fighters against reaction to understand that before a united people battling against Fascism, no imperialist intrigues or lies can stand. For two years every important newspaper in England and America outside the London and New York *Daily Worker* lauded Mihailovich to the skies and called the Partisans Communist bandits.

But the Partisans and the Yugoslav people refused to be discouraged by this. Fighting on gloriously, with limited arms and supplies, their growing strength and complete unity broke through the heavy veil of lies and established clear for all to see and recognise that the Liberation Movement was the Yugoslavian people.

And in this is a lesson for all peoples, fighting for their freedom. The more they unite to fight Fascism, despite all imperialist intrigues, the more they make it impossible for imperialist lies to hoodwink the peoples of Britain and America.

This pamphlet brings home another lesson too; faint-hearted servants of reaction are always saying that an unarmed people can do nothing against the mechanised hordes of Fascism—that until the avenging armies come, all a people can do is to suffer quietly and at best resist passively. The Yugoslav story, just like the story of the heroic Eighteenth Group Army (formerly the Chinese Red Army), gives the lie to this. Tito and his men started with almost nothing. But the complete support of the people and their own heroism brought into existence a powerful movement of liberation, capable of holding at bay seventeen German divisions apart from satellite forces.

All glory to the Yugoslavs who have blazed a new trail—a new way of life for the Balkan peoples.

## INTRODUCTION

THE latest communiques of the General Headquarters of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, the only organized and co-ordinated military force waging a relentless struggle against the Axis invaders and their Quisling forces throughout Yugoslavia for more than two and a half years, have at last broken through the conspiracy of silence and hit the headlines of the world press. According to reports published in the press from Allied Headquarters in Italy the Yugoslav Liberation forces are holding at this moment, in December, 1943, nearly all the Dalmatian islands, parts of the Adriatic coast and huge territories in the mountainous hinterland. Some papers even published reports by British officers who have visited the liberated territories, according to which the Yugoslav Liberation forces are pinning down on their fighting front about 12 German divisions under the command of Field-Marshal Rommel apart from a considerable number of satellite and Quisling divisions. Having in view that there are only nine German divisions at present in Italy these figures fully demonstrate the scope and the magnitude of the battles now raging at this backdoor of Hitlerite Germany and their potential value to the Allied military operations in the Mediterranean.

The Fifth and the Eighth Army in Italy have behind them the powerful Allied fleet which ensures them a steady flow of supplies while the Yugoslav Liberation forces up to recently did not have the chance of getting any supplies from without. In spite of all odds, however, *they have succeeded in equipping an army of 17 divisions by weapons captured from the enemy, and in wielding it into an effective fighting force amidst Hitler's "impregnable fortress of Europe."*

Simultaneously with these nearly unbelievable successes of the Yugoslav Liberation Army, which have been confirmed by most authoritative quarters, venomous attacks have been launched against it and its leaders by certain papers in this country inspired by the so-called Yugoslav "Government" in Cairo. It is claimed in most vigorous terms that the real leader of the national resistance in Yugoslavia is General Mihailovich, War Minister of the so-called Yugoslav "Government" in Cairo and its "legitimate" representative in Yugoslavia. Trapped between the crossfire of the magnificent successes of the Yugoslav Liberation forces, which have won the admiration of the whole freedom-loving world, and the recent start-

ling revelations about the true role of their Axis-collaborator War Minister, the "Government" in Cairo has resorted to long statements defending with a stream of unending epithets pronounced in breath-taking eloquence "the honour and unity" of Mihailovich's "regular army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia," which exists only in the imagination of the most confidential staff of the Yugoslav Information Office in Cairo. While stewing in their own juice the "Government" in Cairo seem to lose their wits. Wild accusations of collaboration with the enemy are raised against the Yugoslav Liberation forces in frantic efforts to compromise them in the eyes of the Allied public, and traitors, such as the late General Blazho Djukanovich, Mihailovich's former deputy in Montenegro and the head of the Axis-controlled "Montenegrin National Committee" whose collaboration with the Italian fascist invaders was highly praised by the Italian-subsidized Quisling paper, *Voice of the Montenegrin*, as long back as October 6th, 1942, are now posthumously declared as heroes and patriots by the Yugoslav "Government" in Cairo. The diabolical fury of the dying outcasts in Cairo reached its climax with the recent establishment of the Provisional National Government in Yugoslavia. In an official statement the panic-stricken "Government" in Cairo, composed exclusively of the representatives of the fascist dictatorships, repudiated the Provisional National Government which represents every national group and all sections of the population as "a movement of terroristic violence" asserting that "in Yugoslavia this movement resulted from enemy propaganda from abroad" and added that "to its success, unfortunately, the Allies have contributed a great deal." Mihailovich's recent proclamation, issued on instructions from the "Government" in Cairo, ordering that "all armed groups in Yugoslavia submit themselves to his authority as Supreme Commander and threatening anyone disobeying it with punishment by military criminal law," surpasses even the wildest flights of imagination in view of the fact that Major Knezhevich, the Royal Military attache in Washington and the "spiritus rector" of the infamous Three Kensington Musketeers, openly stated in a recent speech to Yugoslav airmen in the U. S., that they will have to fight the Yugoslav Liberation forces "with all their might and means" while supporting *Mihailovich's four battalions*.

These shocking facts stare the British democratic public in the face which rightly asks amid these reports, deliberately designed to create confusion in the Allied public, what is really happening in Yugoslavia?

In this pamphlet we have tried to give a clear-cut answer to this question by telling the concise history of the armed

resistance of the nations of Yugoslavia and clarifying the relations between the National Liberation Movement and General Mihailovich. We have set forth only the most essential facts in relation to the development, the organization, the composition and the aims of the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia. We realize that a large section of British public opinion has been misled by the publicity hoax of Mihailovich, systematically perpetrated for more than two and a half years by the tottering Yugoslav "Government" in exile. We feel the pressing urgency for the British democratic public, especially in the Labour Movement, to turn the searchlight of inquiry upon the present situation in Yugoslavia. The nature of this ill-faced hoax, however, cannot be properly visualized without knowing the background of the forces which brought about the present situation. Only thus may it be realized that this controversy is not merely an internal political conflict between Yugoslavs but that it has a far-reaching international character affecting the entire course of the war as well as the future development and co-operation of the democratic forces in the post-war world.

Lack of space prevents us from dwelling at length on the past activities of various Yugoslav Governments but we feel impelled to tell the basic facts about their past for they form an inseparable part of the birth stage of the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia.

The 23 years' existence of the Yugoslav State has been a record of regimes of perpetual police and gendarme terror, of physical extermination of thousands of nationally oppressed people, of continuous suppression of elementary democratic rights and liberties, of bloodbaths staged throughout the country in vain efforts to smash the national and democratic aspirations of the nations of Yugoslavia for the benefit of a rapacious oligarchy of reactionaries holding key positions in the State machinery and identifying at all times the interests of the State with their sectional interests. The conditions of pre-war Yugoslavia, of which the British public knows little or nothing, can be best assessed by the unique "Law of the Protection of the State" which would make any of the late experts of fascist barbarism blush.

This law was put in practice for a long number of years and the terms "bandit," "anti-State element" or "Communist" was applied to all those whose activities were considered by this oligarchy "detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the State." Article 3, section 2, says:

"The authorities can, besides, order that the relatives of bandits directly or collaterally descended to the fourth degree,



be deported to another district. Also deported to other localities will be persons inhabiting houses about which one has a well-founded suspicion that arms, munitions, or an armed individual, rebel, or, in general, some delinquent, are hidden." *Section 3.*

"If the above mentioned are not efficacious for the extermination or surrender of the bandits, and if one is sure that the latter are aided by a township or village, the inhabitants of these places will be deported *en masse*. The deportation sentence is passed by the Prefect...."

"The depopulated towns or villages can then be reoccupied by other loyal persons...."

The chronology of written juridical code does not record anything similar to this monstrous law which will remain an everlasting shadow in the history of modern European civilization.

The continuous struggle against fascism "in all its evil influence and emanations" reached its apex in the popular revolt of the democratic masses, mainly in Serbia and Montenegro, against the signature of the Tripartite Pact in Vienna in March 1941 which meant the last link in the chain in selling out Yugoslavia to the Axis. The turbulent tide of mass insurrection was in the air. Its materialization, however, was precipitated in time by the *coup d'etat* of March 27th 1941, carried out by several cliques of reactionary officers who placed King Peter on the throne. This preventive nature of the *coup d'etat* was plainly and unequivocally revealed two months later, on June 27th 1941, when Prime Minister General Simovich slipped out the truth in one of his apologetic broadcasts to Yugoslavia: "Had not His Majesty King Peter taken the power into His own hands on March 27th Yugoslavia would have eventually been exposed to a revolution and civil war, with all its awful consequences."

The Simovich Government continued the policy of appeasement towards the Axis by sending two prominent septuagenarian members of the Government, Professor Yovanovich, former Prime Minister of the Government-in-exile, to Rome and foxy Dr. Ninichich, former Foreign Minister of the Yugoslav "Government"-in-exile, to Berlin. Both were on the airfield ready to take off for their destinations when Hitler's war machine struck with all its fury.

Hitler knew what he was doing for he had his men in high positions. General Nedich, Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army for many years and the same man who on November 1st 1940 submitted a memorandum to Prince Paul proposing to occupy Salonica with German agreement at the time when the Greeks were engaged

in the fiercest battles with the Italians, was entrusted with the delicate task of setting a trap for the Yugoslav armies in the South. He carried out this premeditated plan to the satisfaction of his German masters who made him the head Quisling of the Serbian puppet State. Some time later he publicly proclaimed with German permission, of course, his unswerving allegiance to King Peter II (*Novo Vreme*, September 17th 1941). The order for the capitulation of the Yugoslav Army was given on April 17th 1941 by Prime Minister Simovich. The fifth column did the rest although it was hardly necessary. Croatia was given to assassin Pavelich and his Axis-trained Ustasha terrorist hordes. Thus in 12 days the Yugoslav State was *de facto* crushed out of existence under the unparalleled brunt of its own bankruptcy and treachery and dismembered into 10 different parts.

The remnants of the ruling oligarchy—apart from those who are now protecting “the interests of the State” under German supervision—form the nucleus of the dominant group within the so-called Yugoslav “Government” in Cairo. These represent the most black-hearted section of the Balkan reactionaries who have been sucking the lifeblood of their people—and other peoples—for 23 years. Today they would not hesitate for a moment, if given the chance, to push the world into a Third World War if their sectional interests were to be saved. It is only logical that this “Government” clings so feverishly to their Axis-collaborator War Minister, General Mihailovich, for he is *their* “legitimate” representative in the country, the “Protector” of *their* State, who would enable them at the appropriate time, backed up by huge international finance-monopolies interested in the exploitation of the fabulous natural resources of Yugoslavia, to stage a come-back to power by re-establishing an ultra-reactionary Great-Serbian military dictatorship under Mihailovich’s direction in Yugoslavia counting on Allied armed support.

The contrast between the so-called Government in Cairo and the magnificent achievements of the nations of Yugoslavia presents itself in the sharpest form as an unprecedented cleavage which exists between the people and the Government-in-exile. It reflects the acute contradictions between the former centralist multi-national State, dominated by an expansionist oligarchy of Great-Serbian reactionaries, and the complete change of equilibrium of the political forces in the country during the war.

The establishment of the Provisional National Government in Yugoslavia on the eve of the Teheran Conference marks a new phase in this war against fascism. It is the first democratic Government in Europe exercising complete authority

over vast stretches of its liberated territories and it is supported by the overwhelming majority of the population. Hence, the mere existence of the Yugoslav "Wrangelite" Government, commanding no support in Yugoslavia except from the Quislings—their associates until the eleventh hour—constitutes a permanent menace to a democratic Allied policy towards Yugoslavia and unless the Allies want to face a disastrous setback by supporting this "Government," its status must be immediately rectified in conformity with the fundamental democratic principles to which the United Nations have pledged themselves.

We believe that the priceless contribution of the nations of Yugoslavia, united in the National Liberation Movement, towards the common cause of the United Nations, calls for the enlistment of the whole-hearted support of the democratic forces in this country, whose moral support for the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia may prove a decisive factor in achieving a common democratic victory.

The undaunted stand of the Yugoslav Liberation Army in the forefront of this world-wide struggle of mankind against fascist aggression will be recorded in history as one of the imperishable epic chapters of this war. This struggle has galvanized millions of our people who are today rising from the depths of sub-human misery, created by a political system cradled in the era of mediaeval feudalism, to the heights of this world-wide war for national and social emancipation. The gigantic scope of their struggle, in all its stages and forms, is the hall-mark of the common realization of the fundamental political issues of unity and the inevitable interdependence of all democratic forces among the nations of Yugoslavia for generations to come. In the fire of the common struggle they have welded into an unsuppressible historical force heralding the dawn of a new civilization which they shall win in their growing, indomitable and righteous might.

In conclusion, it is to be understood that this pamphlet has been produced by the collective efforts of the members of the "Free Yugoslavia" Association in London.

# THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE YUGOSLAV GUERILLAS

The rich historical traditions of the freedom-loving nations of Yugoslavia represent one of the most important sources of the strength and the formidable force of the present guerilla movement in Yugoslavia. During the entire course of their history, ever since their arrival in the Balkans in the seventh century, the Southern Slavs had to wage hard battles against their numerically superior enemies in order to preserve their national freedom. Their land was situated between great militaristic states: Byzantium, Hungary, Turkey and Austria and it was a permanent battlefield in the wars for imperialist expansion. Unable to defend their freedom in any other manner, the Southern Slavs waged relentless guerilla warfare from their rocky mountains.

At different epochs in history the Serbian and Croatian guerillas have called themselves by various names. Until the middle of the nineteenth century they called themselves "Hayducks" and "Uskotsi." They fought the invading Turks and Germans and were the defenders of the poor peasantry from the despotic rule of the foreign feudal landowners. The insurrections of the Croat and Slovene peasants under Matiya Gubetz in the sixteenth century and the uprising of the Serbian peasants under Karageorge in 1804 were mainly the work of guerilla fighters. These struggles reveal to us the deep social significance of the centuries-long struggle for national liberation. At the beginning of the twentieth century the guerilla fighters on the Turkish occupied Balkan territory were called "Chetniks."

Throughout the centuries-long struggle against the Turks, German and Hungarian invaders, these guerillas enjoyed the full support of the whole people who supplied them with food, clothes, news and information. These movements found an artistic expression in the folk-songs on which many generations have been brought up, and from which they have drawn inspiration in the fight for national freedom against the foreign invader.

During the First World War, Croat and Slovene peasants fled into the mountains and forests, and formed "Green Cadres"—groups of guerillas who carried on the struggle against the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. They were joined by Croat

and Slovene soldiers and other deserters from the Austro-Hungarian-German Army. When the German and Bulgarian troops occupied Serbia in 1915, the guerillas were spread all over the country. They attacked enemy quarters, carried out sabotage in the factories, railways and in agriculture, and became a substantial force behind the enemy lines. In 1916 unified guerilla units, supported by the population, started an uprising against the Germans in the district of Toplitsa which rapidly spread to other districts as well. It was suppressed in blood, but the spirit of resistance of the Serbian people was never broken. In 1917 these guerilla detachments became an important factor against which the Austrian authorities were powerless.

## THE CHETNIKS AND USTASHIS

The Serbian word "chetovanye" means guerilla fighting while "cheta" means a unit or company. The Chetniks were patriotic Serbian guerilla fighters who played a prominent part in the Balkan wars for National Liberation. But in 1929 when King Alexander introduced in Yugoslavia the dictatorship headed by General Zhivkovich, recently appointed Assistant Commander-in-Chief of "all Yugoslav Armed Forces," the official Chetnik organization was brought under the control of a group of ultra-reactionary and pro-fascist politicians and officers who transformed it into an advance guard of Great-Serbian imperialism in Yugoslavia.

During the dictatorship regime, Chetnik associations were set up as para-military forces in Croatia, Slovenia and Vojvodina and attached to gendarme stations as reinforcements for "maintaining law and order" in the newly annexed territories. Chetniks received special privileges from the State, especially in Vojvodina where they were given land at the expense of the national minorities. In return, these new Chetniks performed various services to the reactionary regimes, such as acting as stool-pigeons and agents provocateurs among peasants and workers. A typical example of this type, at present a right-hand man of General Mihailovich in Hertze-govina, is Yevdyeovich, the man who concluded in Mihailovich's name, an agreement with the Italians and Ustashis in June, 1942, to fight against the partisans.

Before the war, Yevdyeovich served as an agent provocateur in strikes, and took part in executing a worker in Trbovlje, Slovenia. He has been a paid agent of every reactionary regime, and for some time was editor of a fascist paper. Thus, the Chetnik organization, as an instrument of

*national and social oppression, became compromised in the eyes not only of the oppressed nationalities, but of all those democratic and progressive forces in the country who opposed the reactionary and despotic dictatorship of King Alexander and General Zhiukovich.*

Both from a historical and political viewpoint it is of the utmost importance to draw a parallel between the "Chetniks" and the "Ustashis," the present Croat storm troopers, whose past differs little from that of the "Chetniks." The Croat word "Ustashis" means, in English, "upriser." In the past, they, like the "Chetniks," played a prominent part in the national liberation uprisings and fights against the Turkish and Austrian domination in Hertzegovina at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

As a reply to the Chetnik terrorism in Croatia, an Ustashi organization on fascist lines was founded in Zagreb in 1929 within the framework of the Croat petty-bourgeois Party of Rights. It set itself the ultimate aim of establishing a separate Croat State on Fascist lines by wrecking, sabotaging and dismembering by every means at its disposal the existing Yugoslav State. The Ustashi leader, Ante Pavelich, the present Quisling of Croatia, fled to Italy and from there he directed with Italian aid the disruptive work of his terroristic organization, which, together with the I.M.R.O.—the Macedonian terrorists—was responsible for the assassination in Marsilles in 1936 of King Alexander and Louis Barthou, French Foreign Minister. This, however, did not prevent Prince Paul's pro-Axis Prime Minister, Dr. Stoyadinovich, now interned by the British, from paying a call on Pavelich while he was visiting the Duce in 1937-1938, during which an agreement was drawn up pledging the adherents of the Ustashis in Croatia to abstain from voting in the approaching elections and thereby to smash the victory of the democratic opposition.

Hitler and Mussolini were nourishing and feverishly preparing the Ustashis for years before they declared war on Yugoslavia in April, 1941. As soon as the war broke out, they were given the signal from Berlin and Rome to start exterminating the Serbs in the newly proclaimed "Independent State of Croatia." A month later, when Pavelich set out with his criminal bands, then the Chetniks were given the signal from Rome and Berlin to strike against the Croats. In these horrible massacres carried out on an unprecedented scale in Bosnia and Hertzegovina, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Serbs, have perished in the climax of this hysterical chauvinist hypertrophy of both these fascist lackeys. In these Satanic orgies the roles of both the Ustashis and the Chetniks was essentially the same. Both served as instruments of Axis

intrigue in provoking and fomenting fratricidal war between the Serbs and the Croats in the provinces where they had lived together in peace one with the other for many centuries. At the same time, however, an unbiased scientific investigation would undoubtedly reveal that entire historical and vast social processes are epitomized and unfolded in these internecine feuds whose counteraction spelled the first stage of the breaking up of the whole economic and political structure of the system which has given birth to them.

From this sanguinary carnage arose the partisan movement with such a force that the Ustashis and the Chetniks immediately set about seeking an agreement. This was reached in Doboy in June, 1942, whereby Mihailovich's Chetniks undertook to fight as "Anti-Communist Militia" under Axis command against the Yugoslav Liberation Army with the material support of the Axis forces. The fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina have been the main centres of the national liberation struggle throughout 1942 and 1943 frustrated the Axis plan of creating an "unbridgeable chasm" between the Serbs and the Croats by hiring the Ustashis and the Chetniks to incite a fratricidal war. In fact, this Axis policy of disintegration has been shattered by the formation of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army, although encouraged and prodded by the sinister Royal Yugoslav Government-in-exile through its "legitimate" representative in the country, its Axis-collaborator War Minister, General Mihailovich.

Who are the "partisans" and why do we call the fighting guerillas of Yugoslavia "partisans?" In the first place, it is necessary to bear in mind that the "partisan" in the sense of guerilla fighter, designating troops of irregular fighting behind the enemy lines, does not as has been alleged by both Axis and other sources desiring to use the "Red Bogey" to discredit them, originate from Russia. In point of fact, the word "partisan" used in the sense of "guerilla" is an old English word dating from the seventeenth century. The guerilla fighters of the First Revolutionary War in America of 1776 called themselves partisans. The leaders of the well-known American guerilla units like Marion, Pickens, Lee and others who played a glorious part in the War of Independence in 1780 and 1781 called themselves "partisans." The Russian guerillas fighting Napoleon's invading army and those who fought in the Russian Revolution in 1917 also called themselves "partisans."

After the fall of Yugoslavia, when the Yugoslav patriots started guerilla fighting, they could not use the national expression for "guerilla" for these expressions, such as "Ustasha" and "Chetnik" were compromised. The

"Ustashis" were Nazi-controlled Fascist terrorist bands in Croatia. At the beginning the Serbs tried to forgive the Chetniks for their sins from the days of the dictatorship, and some of them believed that the Chetniks would fight for the freedom of their country as they had done before. Consequently, when the war began, many Serbian patriots joined the Chetnik detachments. However, it did not take long to see that the present Chetnik leaders have nothing in common with those Chetniks which history remembers. Kosta Pecharatz, Generalissimo and Commander-in-Chief of the official Chetnik organization in Yugoslavia, placed himself at the disposal of the German Gestapo as early as August, 1941, and called on all Chetniks to follow him. A little later, in October, 1941, another Chetnik leader, Drazha Mihailovich, reached agreement with Quisling Nedich and the Italian Occupationist authorities.

As a result of the treacheries of these Chetnik leaders, all true patriots and fighters for freedom have left the Chetnik detachments in Serbia, so that to-day "Chetniks" mean only those Quisling bands which are fighting side by side with Germans and Ustashis against the real Yugoslav patriots who are to be found in the ranks of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments.

In view of the fact that "partisan" is the oldest term for guerilla, it is natural that it has been adopted in many languages and that today the heroic and indomitable guerillas of the Soviet Union, China, Yugoslavia, Greece, Norway, France and Poland, all bear this name with pride manifesting their common solidarity and unflinching determination to carry on relentless struggle against the fascist invaders till their final annihilation. Since the military reorganisation of the Yugoslav guerillas in the liberated territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the course of 1942, the Yugoslav partisan units have been reconstituted into battalions, brigades, divisions and corps, and united as a regular army under the name of "National Liberation Army" in occasional but definite liaison with other partisan detachments fighting in the occupied territory very often disconnected from the main centres of resistance.



## THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT *versus* MIHAILOVICH

THE armed resistance of the Yugoslavs, which started immediately after the fall of Yugoslavia, was a spontaneous movement of the whole Yugoslav people. Guerilla groups sprang up in all parts of Yugoslavia nearly simultaneously and often without mutual connection. They were bound together only by the common wish to carry on the fight.

This movement was not the work of any one man, of one group, or political party. It arose from the single determination of the nations of Yugoslavia to fight for its liberation from fascist tyranny and to help the Allies, it was further hastened by the unparalleled terrorism of the occupationist forces, which made life in the towns and villages unbearable even for the most peace-loving citizens.

The organization of the resistance movement was started by young progressive people and intellectuals who had been opposing the oppressive regimes of dictatorship for years. They have called their guerilla units "partisan" detachments because the traditional word "Chetnik" was compromised in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the peoples of Yugoslavia during the dictatorship. At the outset, a certain number of sincere Serbian patriots, mostly peasants, however, joined the Chetnik detachments believing that the Chetnik leaders would lead them to fight the occupationists.

The masses of volunteers who went into the mountains in May and June, 1941, joined either movements, according to which was nearest to them, so that their ranks soon filled up with people whose one aim was to drive out the fascist invaders from their country.

The terrible massacres of Serbs by the Ustasis in the beginning of June, 1941, in Bosnia, and the new hopes roused by the entry of the Soviet Union into the war, caused the general national uprisings in Western Serbia and Eastern Bosnia in June, 1941. Within a few weeks, the rebels wiped out the weak German garrisons in this district, and gained complete control over a wide territory, including the four important towns: Uzhitze, Chachak, Gornji Milanovatz and Zvornik.

In order to avoid the necessity of asking for too many reinforcements, the commandant of Serbia, General von

Dankelmann, used the most devilish intrigues in his fight against the Yugoslav guerillas. At that time the doubts which some democrats had felt for some of the Chetnik leaders, were unfortunately justified.

While the partisans had firmly organised their ranks and imposed a firm discipline, there appeared rivalries between the Chetnik leaders. The Germans took advantage of this. Already in August, 1941, they brought to their side by bribery, Kosta Pechanatz, one of the would-be leaders of all Chetniks. On August 27th, 1941, he issued a proclamation to all Chetniks, ordering them to break off the fight against the Germans and place themselves under his command in order to put down the "Communists." In reality this meant fighting against the partisans since in their ranks the Communists were in a minority.

Only a negligible number of Chetniks answered his summons—namely the supporters of the previous dictatorship. With the help of the Germans and the Serbian Quisling, General Nedich, however, he proceeded to form bands consisting of the worst scum, and to send them to fight against the partisans. His bands wore the same Chetnik emblems as the Chetniks under the command of another Chetnik leader, Drazha Mihailovich, and whenever they encountered superior forces of the partisans, they pretended to be Mihailovich's Chetniks. In this way the Germans succeeded already in September, 1941, in creating confusion amongst the patriots and in provoking the first minor conflicts between the Chetniks and the partisans. With a view to removing these misunderstandings and to establish co-operation and thus to bring about co-ordinated military operations against the German occupationist forces the partisan leaders carried on negotiations with Drazha Mihailovich.

At the same time the Germans started to intrigue through Quisling Nedich with Drazha Mihailovich. Nedich tried to convince Mihailovich that the first task of the true Serbian patriots was the fight against Bolshevism, and that the fight against the Germans should be delayed until the Allies landed in the Balkans.

Drazha Mihailovich accepted these arguments. Towards the end of October, 1941, an armed fight developed in South-Western Serbia between the partisans and Mihailovich's Chetniks. In the course of a few weeks of fratricidal warfare the initial forces of Mihailovich were completely smashed. All those true patriots who joined him in order to fight for the liberation of their country left him. Some joined the partisans and continued to fight against the occupationists while the others went to their homes. Drazha Mihailovich, being left

alone, had to look for support to those Chetnik leaders who had become the complete vassals of the Axis. Today he has no other guerilla army except those Quisling Chetniks who are not fighting against the enemy, because, as they say, "the time has not come yet" but on the contrary, are fighting within the ranks of the Axis-commanded so-called "Anti-Communist" militia against the true Yugoslav patriots.

In spite of the fact that General Mihailovich, as War Minister, has been in steady contact with the Yugoslav Government in London (at least so the Government claims) ever since the beginning of 1942, no official statement, describing even the smallest victory of Mihailovich in the fighting against the Axis, has so far been issued. All reports about his alleged successes come from unofficial sources. In most cases the successes of the National Liberation Army and Partisan detachments of Yugoslavia, broadcast in their regular communiques two or three days before, have been systematically ascribed to Mihailovich.

The British public, however, has repeatedly been told that the fighting guerillas of Yugoslavia are "Chetniks." Even a film was recently shown in this country distorting the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Yugoslavia and glorifying General Mihailovich, Commander-in-Chief of the Chetniks in Yugoslavia. This film was merely a link in a chain of distortions and deliberate and systematic misrepresentations of facts regarding the fighting guerillas of Yugoslavia.

Mihailovich's agreement and active collaboration with the Axis as well as his fratricidal activities are not based upon some romantic fairy-tales but are substantiated by numerous documents and testimonies which prove his treachery beyond any doubt. Let us first of all consider the following well-known facts in relation to the Axis policy towards the ever-growing partisan movement in Yugoslavia.

On December 5th, 1941, a month before Mihailovich was appointed War Minister in the Yugoslav Government in London, the German-controlled Serbian Quisling paper from Belgrade, *Novo Vreme*, wrote, after quoting a report by the Reuter Agency, in which, according to Yugoslav reports imaginary successes in the fighting against the Germans had been ascribed to Mihailovich.

"It was easy for the British to invent even a front on Western Morava and the Commander-in-Chief, Drazha Mihailovich, although it is well known to everyone that in the valley of Western Morava, right in Chachak and Uzhitze, there only exist the last two nests of Communist bands and that *Drazha Mihailovich's men, conscious of their Serbian national duties, have joined General Nedich and his units.*"

Is it a coincidence that the fascist paper, *Giornale d'Italia*, wrote in 1942, at the time when the partisan movement was in full sway in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that "*the partisans' war should be answered by the same methods but for that it is indispensable to have the co-operation of the local population*"? It is certainly not, for we know that the whole policy of the Italian fascist forces of occupation with the tacit approval of the German High Command and the Gestapo has been directed to creating their vassal army by the use of the Chetnik detachments who knew the local conditions and each little mountain path in those regions where the partisans were operating.

The Bulgarian Quisling paper, *Zora*, on September 10th, 1942, printed a remarkable article on the relations between Mihailovich and the Yugoslav partisans. Vassil Seizov, the author, asked one of the Serbian Quisling Government leaders why Nedich's armed detachments attack and wage war against the partisans and never against Drazha Mihailovich and his men. The man answered:

*"At the beginning of September of last year we negotiated and concluded an agreement with Mihailovich on the joint struggle against the partisans. He received money from us. We collaborated on a common plan of action against the partisans."*

"However, under the influence of his advisers, Mihailovich later refused to collaborate with us and concluded an agreement with the partisans, compared with whom he was much weaker both in men and arms. This collaboration between Mihailovich and the partisans did not last long. Clashes started between them.

*"From that time onwards Mihailovich, who has his own organization, has actually been working for us. That is why we are leaving him alone. . . . The fact remains that Nedich's armed detachments and Mihailovich's Yugoslav Army are fighting against the partisans."*

And now this is what some of Mihailovich's friends and those whose unbiased judgment is beyond doubt, say about the general:

Hanson Baldwin, military correspondent of the *New York Times* and an ardent defender of Mihailovich, wrote on November 19th, 1942:

*"The Communist accusations against General Mihailovich paint him as a pro-fascist and accuse him of traffic with the Italians and with the "Petain Government" of Field-Marshal Milan Nedich, who heads the puppet German-controlled State of Serbia. The defenders of General Mihailovich do not deny that he may have been in touch with both the Italians and*

*Marshal Nedich, but they point out that 'deals' are common in Balkan politics...."*

The Istanbul correspondent of *The Times* reported on February 10th, 1943, that "General Mihailovich, who had maintained a sort of tacit truce with the Italians, on hearing that the latter were preparing to leave Herzegovina to the Croats at arms length sent word to the Italian commander of Grahovo and Nevesinje bidding him stay there"...and again (May 11th, 1943) refers to "the sort of tacit truce" maintained "for some time" by the Italians with Mihailovich.

R. W. Seton-Watson, the well-known expert on South-East European affairs, writes in the *Spectator* (February 26th, 1943) :

"After a gallant resistance in Western Serbia, they (Mihailovich's Chetniks—Ed.) found it necessary to withdraw into the fastnesses of Montenegro, and there to play for time: and if this has led to a sort of tacit understanding between them and the Italian army of occupation, it would be unjust to condemn it without knowing all the local circumstances. But the charge levelled against the General from Moscow, and supported by an official Note to the Yugoslav Government—to the effect that he has had dealings with the Germans also—is far more serious, and must be probed to the bottom."

On March 3rd, 1943, the Croat Quisling paper, *Nova Hrvatska*, stated that, "the best units of Mihailovich had placed themselves at the disposal of the Croat Government authorities."

On March 5th, 1943, the *Tribune* wrote that "on January 26th the official German newspaper in Croatia, *Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien*, reported a speech by the Croat Quisling Minister of Culture in the course of which, he said, 'the Chetniks, under the leadership of Mihailovich have already partly surrendered arms and fight together with the Croat Government troops. . . .'"

W. M. Towler, Foreign Editor of the *Daily Herald*, stated on March 24th, 1943, that "despite Communist accusations against him, Yugoslav officials here cannot believe Mihailovich would trade with enemy forces. But some of the men who have fought with him in the past are so bitterly anti-Communist that they have broken away now to fight against the Partisans and have accepted arms from the Italians to do so."

And lastly, A. J. Cummings (*News Chronicle*, May 28th, 1943), makes the position clear by stating that "it is now admitted, even by some of his most ardent supporters here, that Mihailovich has an agreement with the Italians whereby he receives arms and munitions and actually joins them in giving battle to the partisans who are the real opponents (and

brilliantly successful opponents) of the Axis invaders.

"Mihailovich hates the democratic and Left Wing elements of which the partisan army is mainly composed; and his purpose appears to be to prepare for a dictatorial regime under his direction after the war."

*Time and Tide*, one of the staunchest defenders of General Mihailovich, wrote on May 29th, 1943, that "so serious is the situation, and so desperately has Mihailovich been trying to secure equipment, that he has been accused of trafficking with the enemy—particularly with the Italians—who are said to have sold arms to him through Albania. The truth is he has bought and commandeered arms and munitions wherever he could find them to equip his army." And again on June 12th it openly admitted that "it is true that Mihailovich has had to suppress Partisan activities here and there, for they were highly prejudicial to his ultimate purpose."

In March, 1943, the Liberation Army captured a document which was the treaty concluded between Mihailovich's aide-de-camp Yevdyevich and the Italian General Roatta. This treaty had been concluded on September 29th, 1942, according to which, the Italian Command undertook to furnish Mihailovich's Chetniks with arms, provisions and money for Army pay, which "will be increased and equal to that of the Italian soldiers." On the 5th of February, 1943, a communication issued by the German Information Bureau was published in the Belgrade newspapers, in which it was stated that in the large-scale operations in Bosnia against the Partisan units, local Chetniks took part on the side of the Italo-German Forces.

The most remarkable admissions come, however, from *Nineteenth Century and After* (August, 1943), which calls Mihailovich "a hero-patriot, and one of the greatest figures in the Second World War," while making the following significant admissions:

"It is true that the Partisans fought the Germans, and with great courage, whenever they could. But they were nevertheless a menace to the work which Mihailovich had undertaken. . . . .

"Communism, as an organised movement, was quelled in Serbia with the help of the Chetniks. They, under the leadership of Mihailovich, are to-day the army of national resistance and regeneration, and England's authentic Allies against the common foe.

"The Germans tried to negotiate with Mihailovich, but in vain. The Italians were a little more successful—no doubt to their own regret later on. . . . . It has always been Italian policy to set Balkan nation against Balkan nation and faction against faction.

"It was in the interest of the Italians that Mihailovich should be weak, but not too weak. A kind of semi-armistice between them and the Chetniks was informally established. In this way, Mihailovich was able, for a time, to secure his rear—and economise ammunition by limiting its use to the war with the Germans and the Croats. Even so, he was in danger of using more than he could afford. To replenish his stock of arms as well as ammunition, he used the gold which had been saved from the Germans in Belgrade and had been carried into the mountains. Albanians served as intermediaries. They purchased arms and ammunition off the Italians and sold them to Mihailovich against gold, making a big profit. Mihailovich also made a practice of holding Italian prisoners to ransom. . . The legend that Mihailovich is a 'Fascist' is constantly being replenished by references to the fact that there was, as we have shown, a barter and a kind of semi-armistice between him and the Italians so as to obtain ammunition and to secure his rear. . . ."

*The Nineteenth Century* feels that it is its duty to justify Mihailovich's pro-Axis and anti-British speeches which he made in the spring of 1943 by stating "that the delays and difficulties created by political bias against him, by incomprehension of what is happening in the Balkans, and by bureaucratic pettiness in London, should, at times, have exasperated him to the last degree, and that in his utterances he has not always referred to his Allies in the most flattering terms, seems to us natural. It is the privilege of a great commander to have a temper—indeed, a temper is often an inseparable part of his greatness. . . ."

Finally, on September 5th, 1943, the Axis-controlled Croat Quisling radio station, "Rakovitz," revealed or rather confirmed once again Mihailovich's collaboration with the Axis in an admission of recent partisan successes by saying, "to-day Chetnik detachments in Croatia exist only where they have reached agreement and recognised Croat authority, that is to say, only where they have offered their assistance to the Axis forces in the fighting against the partisans. This is the case with the Chetniks in Lika and Bosnia as well as those operating in the vicinity of Klyuch and Knin. There they are operating as a battalion of "Anti-Communist militia" in the service of the Axis. They receive payment, clothing, food, arms and ammunition for their services against the Communists. Mihailovich's activities on Croat territory are restricted—with some insignificant exceptions—to districts temporarily occupied by Axis forces but even there they have been serving under the command of the "Anti-Communist militia."

And lastly, the staunchest defender of Mihailovich, the

*Sunday Dispatch* (September 19th, 1943) made a rather late admission: "Mihailovich did come to agreement with local Italian commanders whereby he refrained from attack if they would. In this way he was able to conserve his men. . . ."

The German Press maintained for a long time solemn silence over Mihailovich's game with the Italians. Now, however, annoyed at the Darlanic zig-zags of the Italian fascist generals, Ambrosio and Roatta, high officials of Marshal Badoglio's co-belligerent Government, who were responsible for the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs during the Italian occupation, the Germans decided to break the silence. A special correspondent of the *Times* reported from the German frontier on October 12th, 1943:

*"Das Reich* blames Ambrosio and Roatta for systematically impeding the Germans and facilitating the betrayal of their ally even before the Badoglio-Eisenhower armistice. *Das Reich* asserts that these two Italian Generals were to blame for the prevention of the total annihilation of the insurgents in Croatia and Serbia; Ambrosio, as Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Second Army in Croatia, having from the outset worked to undermine the young Croat state. . . . Roatta had allied himself with General Mihailovich and supplied him with food and war material."

The Nazis have shown lately a touching sense of regard for rats fleeing from sinking ships. They seldom fail to prove their Teutonic spirit of efficiency and thoroughness in hunting down their ratting accomplices—even if only on the air. These are the highlights of a detailed elaboration of the above accusations against Ambrosio and Roatta, broadcast on the German-controlled Rome radio on October 29th, 1943:

"Ambrosio's connivance with the enemy is to-day proved by incontestable documents. At Karlovatz and Sushak the trusted envoys of the London Yugoslav Government and of Mihailovich were received by him. Yevdjovich, ex-deputy of the Yugoslav Parliament, faithful friend of King Peter of Serbia, a very bitter opponent of Germany, was the chief exponent of this course, which, beginning immediately after the Yugoslav defeat, became intense during 1942. Another emissary was the Commander of the Chetnik bands of Bosnia and Herzegovina—Trifunovich-Birchanin—who had been recruiting the Orthodox population of Dalmatia. They received every assistance from Ambrosio in foodstuffs, arms and money, and were left free to travel about and act freely in the territory occupied by his army. To justify this to his superiors and to the German military authorities in the Balkans Ambrosio resorted to the formula "Divide and Rule." It was necessary to divide the enemy, separate the Chetniks from the Partisans,



and to use one against the other. It was therefore necessary to help the Chetniks of Mihailovich, Yevdjevich and Trifunovich-Birchanin who depended on London, but were really ultra-nationalists who wanted to fight the Partisans sponsored by Moscow. With this object in view Ambrosio armed 20,000 Chetniks and called them our allies. He treated them as well, or even better than, the Italian soldiers, and allowed them to commit massacres. Ambrosio's successor in the second army was Roatta, brought there by him in order to continue his work. Roatta gave the emissary Yevdjevich full powers to treat with the commanders of divisions in order to become acquainted with their dispositions and follow the Italian units. As though this were not enough, while Roatta was carrying out these base manoeuvres, Ambrosio was entrusting with other strategic and political negotiations another general—Castellano—who had had discussions with Mihailovich. Castellano was Ambrosio's man, and enjoyed the unlimited confidence of Badoglio; he was the same man who signed the shameful armistice at Eisenhower's headquarters."

The Nazis, for obvious reasons, do not want to oblige us as to tell us just why they publish so late these accusations against Ambrosio and Roatta. Is it because the efficient Gestapo did not learn about it till now or is it because they knew all the time about the collaboration between the Italians and General Mihailovich but did not want to break up this inspiring idyllic game while it was directed against their common enemy, the Yugoslav Liberation Army?

It is to be noticed that the Polish landed gentry in London has lately taken a keen interest in the Mihailovich affair and it seems its issue is close to their heart. The *Free Europe* on November 5 published a violent attack against the Yugoslav section of the B.B.C. for its anti-Mihailovich attitude and has substantiated its contentions with certain quotations of news items alleged to have been broadcast by the B.B.C. on September 24 and September 29. An investigation of the authentic texts of the broadcasts in question have proved, however, that the quotations were inaccurate. The quotations did, however, correspond literally to the interpretations given to the B.B.C. broadcasts of September 24 and 29 by the Serbian Nazi-controlled Quisling paper *Novo Vreme*. The bait which reminds us of the Katin Plot is swallowed once again. But isn't rather unwise to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the doomed Yugoslav Wrangelites in Cairo and London or is it perhaps just another magnanimous act of fraternal solidarity towards a twin-brother in these times of common distress?

Before Pagliacci leaves the scene he pathetically cries out: *La comedia e finita*. So does General Roatta on November 7th,

1943, in an interview with Cecil Sprigge, Reuter's correspondent, when in his farewell speech addressed to his former friends deserting him at the last moment, he exclaims in anguish :

*"I personally distributed arms to 30,000 Chetniks to enable them to take up the fight against their persecutors and now most strangely I am being accused as responsible for these outrages."*

Next day on November 8, General Sir Maitland Wilson, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, sent the following message to Yugoslavia :

"Since the surrender of Italy, Yugoslav arms have achieved successes against the Germans, which have won the admiration of the whole free world. All along the Eastern shores of the Adriatic and in the mountainous hinterland, the Germans have been forced to fight bitter battles. To-day the Germans with difficulty maintain a precarious hold on certain towns and ports ; outside them they are powerless. I salute these notable successes of the Yugoslav forces of Liberation. I pledge to all Yugoslavs all the support which, after due consideration for the total requirements of combined Allied strategy it may be possible to supply.

"I must give also the following stern warning. I have learnt that in some areas of Yugoslavia, particularly in Dalmatia, *certain men, dishonouring the name of Chetnik, are helping the Germans in their vain attempts to subdue the forces of Liberation.* These men, who are shamefully betraying the cause of their country add to this shame by claiming that their actions have British approval.

"This claim is entirely false. I give this final warning : every man who fights bravely against the Germans for the liberation of his country receives the full support of the United Nations. Every man who, from whatever motive, helps the Germans, is the enemy of the United Nations. All those once honest men, who have been misled by mistaken notions of their country's interests into helping the Germans, must immediately desert German service. Otherwise they will be regarded as traitors to their own people and as enemies of the United Nations.

"Finally, to all our brave fellow-fighters in Yugoslavia I send greetings. Hard struggles lie before us all. But be sure that our common fight against the Germans will end in total victory and in freedom for all the peoples.

"Greetings !"

On November 10th an officer from the headquarters of C.-in-C. Tito has arrived at Eighth Army H.Q. bearing the following message for General Montgomery :

*"I am confident that the fraternity in arms, sealed with the blood of the finest sons of Great Britain and Yugoslavia, will not only contribute to a speedy triumph over detested German Fascism, but will also foster full comprehension, on the part of you, personally, your soldiers and the whole British nation of the aspirations which permeate the nations of Yugoslavia."*

General Montgomery sent this reply to C.-in-C. Tito on November 12th :

"I thank you, General, for your kindly message of congratulations and comradeship. It is with great pleasure that I hear of your continued successes against the oppressor of your country and our common enemy.

"The Nazis will suffer for the wrongs they have committed against the freedom-loving peoples of Europe. Now, on both sides of the Adriatic Sea, they are receiving the blows of vengeance.

"I wish you good fortune in your battles, and I salute the bravery of the Yugoslav soldiers fighting in the common cause of liberty and justice."

Thus the web of the lies and allegations against the Yugoslav Liberation Army is torn asunder. The Daedalian labyrinths of reactionary intrigue are penetrated and blasted apart under the tremendous brunt of the contradictions of their own bankruptcy and corruption. The Mihailovich myth, a colossus which like its predecessors was cloaked in a veil of pathological megalomania and mediaeval obscurantism, is now shattered, lying prostrate at our feet. The eleventh hour of the masquerade is over.

# THE MAIN MILITARY OPERATIONS OF THE YUGOSLAV LIBERATION ARMY

In November, 1941, the Germans opened their first great offensive against the Partisans. While four German divisions with tanks and aircraft advanced through Western Serbia, Mihailevich treacherously stabbed the Partisans in the back which enabled the Germans to recapture the liberated towns and to annihilate large Partisan detachments. After this, the German official agencies and the Quisling press proclaimed that the Partisan movement in Serbia was completely destroyed.

In reality this was entirely untrue. The Partisans retired in small groups from Serbia to the Sandzhak and into Eastern Bosnia to join the guerillas who were active there. Afterwards, during the winter, some groups returned into Serbia and continued their activity which has never ceased to this day, although it is no longer on the scale of autumn, 1941.

In the middle of January, 1942, the Germans started their second offensive, this time against the Partisans in Eastern Bosnia. This offensive was even less successful than the first one. The Germans succeeded in recapturing some towns which had until then been held by the Partisans, but they could not surround and destroy the Partisan units.

The third offensive against the Partisans began simultaneously in Eastern Bosnia, Sandzhak, Montenegro and Herzegovina. It was carried out under the German commander of Serbia, General Bader, but mainly Italian units, including artillery and aircraft, took part in the operations. The Italians went into the battle against the Yugoslav patriots in the middle of April, 1942. After a month and a half of fierce fighting, the Italians had to retreat and the Partisans started counter-attacking. In the autumn of 1942 they succeeded in liberating 50,000 square kilometres of territory in the Western part of Yugoslavia, with a great number of villages and 24 towns.

The last three months of 1942 and the first week of 1943 were comparatively quiet. The Yugoslav partisans, who were by then holding a fairly large stretch of territory, could now organise their movement militarily and politically.

Some kind of regular army was organised. This army consisted of the guerillas hitherto known as Partisans and of guerilla fighters who had previously been active under different local names. It was built up according to all the rules of

military science, and was divided into detachments, battalions, brigades and divisions, united under the name of the National Liberation Army. Smaller units which were left to fight the enemy far away from the territory on which the National Liberation Army was operating, continued to be called "Partisan units."

At the head of the Liberation Army and Partisan units a unified High Command was placed. The Commander-in-Chief is Marshal TITO whose real name has recently been officially disclosed as Yosip Broz, 58-year-old Croat from Zagorye, near Zagreb. A locksmith by profession, he was the leader of the underground Yugoslav Labour movement between 1929 and 1940. Commanders were drawn partly from among the guerillas who had distinguished themselves in battle and displayed military ability in the course of a year's liberation struggle. An officers' school was opened on the liberated territory where the more experienced and educated officers of the former Yugoslav Army teach. Several hundred able commanders of the National Liberation Army have already graduated from this school.

The most interesting personality among the members of the High Command was Rev. Vladimir Zechevich who is now the Commissioner for Internal Affairs in the Provisional National Government. In the beginning he had organised a Chetnik battalion in Western Serbia, in a district which had always been famous for its excellent soldiers. When in November, 1941, Drazha Mihailovich asked him to stop the fight against the Germans and to attack the Partisans, he refused to do so, and later on joined with his whole battalion the National Liberation Army. Actually, he has been attached in his capacity as arch-priest to the High Command of Yugoslav Liberation Army while his Catholic colleague, Dr. Metod Mikush, is the chaplain of the High Command of the Slovenian Partisans.

Already on the 20th January, 1943, the fourth and the greatest offensive against the Liberation Army was launched. The intention of the enemy was to surround and annihilate the National Liberation Army. With this purpose in view, he concentrated against them six Italian and six German divisions, in addition to considerable Quisling forces, as well as several squadrons of bombers, a great number of mountain artillery guns, and a few tank units. Bihach, the capital of the Partisans was bombed continuously for several days by 18 planes.

The continuous battles which were being fought under the most difficult circumstances lasted for more than two months.

The ring of the numerically superior enemy forces was being drawn more and more tightly round the liberated territories. The Liberation Army suffered terrible privations in all necessary means of life, especially grave was the complete lack of salt, which began to affect adversely the health of the population. Yet, the desperate fight was continued. The Yugoslav partisans tried to force the enemy into night encounters and bayonet fighting in which they were more skilful and thus weaken him as much as possible.

On the 3rd March, 1943, the German Command solemnly announced that the mopping-up operations in Bosnia were concluded and that the bandits, as they call the Liberation Army, had been utterly destroyed.

In reality, the Germans had only succeeded in capturing some of the larger towns which had hitherto been held by the Liberation Army, and one part of their territory. They also managed to cut the National Liberation Army into two parts. One group remained to fight in Western Bosnia and was called the Bosnian Corps. The other group retired to the mountain districts West of Sarajevo.

The second group of the Liberation Army which fought West of Sarajevo launched, on the 23rd March 1943, offensive operations in Hertzegovina and Eastern Bosnia. Their aim was to transfer the fight into the territories of Montenegro, Sandzhak and Serbia. They partly succeeded, but before the operations brought about the full results, the Germans started their fifth offensive against the National Liberation Army. They surrounded them from all sides with superior forces, and pressed them back into the mountains of Northern Montenegro. After forty days of stubborn and desperate fighting, the National Liberation Army succeeded in breaking through the enemy's encirclement and reaching the mountains of Eastern Bosnia.

During the summer of 1943 extensive operations have been carried out in Eastern Bosnia in the mountainous region around the upper stream of the river Vrbas, in Lika, in Slavonia, and throughout North-Western Croatia.

In Serbia and in Srem smaller Partisan units have undertaken a series of successful operations against the strategically important railway lines.

In Slovenia, the Slovene Liberation Front, as a fraction of the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement, organized immediately after the fall of Yugoslavia a stiff resistance and the number of Partisan Detachments has grown not only in the part of Slovene territory which was the component part of Yugoslavia but also in those Slovene regions which were under the yoke of Italian and German fascism before the war.

Up to the downfall of Italy, however, there were no large units of the National Liberation Army operating in Slovenia but only Partisan detachments whose incessant and energetic operations inflicted tremendous losses on the enemy. These operations were mainly directed against the railway lines, for Slovenia is the important railway junction which connects South Germany, Hungary, Italy, and the Balkans. As a result of systematic attacks on objectives around the important railway networks at Lyublyana and Zidani most of the traffic was often held up.

On the very day that Italy signed the armistice, the Slovene Liberation Front launched large-scale operations in all Slovene districts under Italian occupation. A general mobilization was proclaimed and the democratic control by the committees of the Liberation Front was established everywhere, except in a small number of larger towns which the Germans succeeded in seizing. The Slovene Liberation Front at the same time guaranteed the Italian minority national rights and autonomy and the delegate of the Italian minority, Ferdinando Barega, is already taking part in the work of the National Liberation Committee at Monfalcone. It also passed a decision according to which the unification of the hitherto Italian-occupied Slovenian Littoral with "free Slovenia in democratic Yugoslavia" was completed. The Liberation Army blocked all railways in the strategically vital triangle, Trieste-Goritz-Fiume, and fierce battles are still being fought with the Germans in this district although the enemy is hurling strong armoured units in the battle.

The National Liberation Movement has in the same way taken advantage of Italy's capitulation in all other districts which have been under Italian occupation. Between the 10th and 15th of September the Liberation Army took the two largest Yugoslav ports, Split and Sushak, as well as several large parts of the coast and nearly all the islands along the Dalmatian coast.

Owing to their technical superiority, the Germans, after more than two weeks of violent fighting, succeeded in regaining the ports of Split and Sushak but the Liberation Army is still holding huge mountainous areas beyond these towns which enables them to harass continually the communication lines between the coast and the interior.

Simultaneously the operations have taken great proportions throughout all the other districts of the country. Huge quantities of arms and ammunition, seized and surrendered by the Italians, made possible the formation of new units. To-day the Yugoslav National Liberation Army possesses heavy artillery, armoured units, light naval vessels, and a small

number of aircraft seized at the capture of the airfield at Goritza.

## THE RESULT OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

For more than two years the flame of the war of Liberation against the German and Italian occupation has been raging on the territory of Yugoslavia. It has cost the armies of occupation dear, in men as well as in material. According to the *Red Star*, the German High Command was by the beginning of July 1943, compelled to keep about 40 Axis divisions in Yugoslavia. Fifteen to eighteen Italian divisions, 7 German divisions, 6 Bulgarian, 4 Hungarian and 6 Croat Fascist divisions were concentrated there, in addition to the numerous Quisling troops of Ustashis, Nedich's troops and Mihailovich's Chetniks.

The military operations very often developed into big battles, with all kinds of arms and huge masses of men participating. The violence of the struggle is increasing in proportion to the expansion and strengthening of the National Liberation Army and Partisan units.

The German and Italian Command tried by all means to terminate as rapidly and as thoroughly as possible, the resistance of the Yugoslav people, and they have launched furious attacks against the Yugoslav Liberation Army. The persistence of their attacks is to be explained by the fact that the Yugoslav Army immobilizes large armies of invaders whom Hitler cannot send to some other theatre of war. The fighters of the Yugoslav Army of Liberation inflict many serious blows on these armies. It dominates the most important lines of communication in the Balkan peninsula, such as, for instance, the international railway line leading to Istanbul and Salonika. If to-day the railways of Yugoslavia do not play an important role, it will not be true in the future, especially if and when the armies of the United Nations land in the Balkans.

The National Liberation Army is revenging itself on the invaders for their exploitation of the country, and is hindering the occupiers' policy of pillaging and brigandage. It is destroying their man-power, and teaching the peoples of Yugoslavia how to fight for the National Liberation of the Fatherland. And lastly, it is becoming increasingly clear that there exist strong and well organized military units composed of Yugoslav patriots who are operating inside the so-called "European Fortress"—a fact to which the German and Fascist occupying authorities cannot reconcile themselves, because they see in these military units of the Yugoslav people a serious opposition and a real menace to their domination of Yugoslavia.



This menace grows daily, throwing into confusion the German and Fascist invaders, thanks to the decisive and resolute actions of the Partisan forces.

The Fascist papers published in Zagreb, describe, among many other reports which illustrate the military activities of the Liberation Army, the taking by the Partisans of the town of Sluny on the 14th of December last, as follows: "On Saturday at about 4-30 p.m., a terrible explosion suddenly occurred. The first artillery grenade fired by the Partisans exploded on the building of the Police Prefecture. After this, explosions followed each other as if the sky had split asunder and the earth was trembling. It was the Partisans who were firing on Sluny with 13 guns. Mobile and heavy machine-guns maintained an incessant fire; the Partisans' mine throwers never ceased their bombardment. Sluny was attacked on all sides by every type of weapon."

These few lines give the best possible evidence of the attacking army's offensive spirit and their fairly good equipment.

From where have the Yugoslav Partisans procured these arms, as we know that up to now they have received no help from outside?

The arms, with which the Liberating Army of Partisans is fighting to-day, are, as a rule, taken from the enemy.

It was in June 1942, that this Army of Liberation, during its offensive operations—according to incomplete reports—seized 12 guns, 37 mine-throwers, 203 machine-guns, 4,064 rifles, and more than a million cartridges. During this period alone, approximately 11,000 of the enemy were killed, and 4,768 officers and men taken prisoner.

In the following month thousands more rifles and hundreds of machine-guns were seized from the enemy. In certain operations undamaged tanks were taken, and were immediately used against the enemy. These captured weapons are looked upon by the Partisan fighter as the apple of his eye.

The Commander of the Yugoslav Partisan Armies of Liberation, Tito, is the most popular man, not only among the fighters for freedom, but also among the large masses of the Yugoslav population. Even the Fascist press of Zagreb and Belgrade has been forced to recognize this fact.

"Tito is the idol of the Partisans," writes the *Nova Hrvatska*, "when he arrived in his car in the town of Sluny and appeared among the Partisans, it was the greatest possible event for them." The same newspaper states that "Tito has enormous political influence among the Partisans."

The High Command of the Liberation Army has rallied round him a large group of officers of the Yugoslav Army.

Colonel Orovich, officer on the General Staff, Lieut-Colonel Perovich, Major Polyanatz and Major Djokich, Captain Arso-Yovanovich, nine captains, ten lieutenants. Apart from these, many regular and reserve officers are detachment company and battalion commanders.

The Army of Liberation has united and gained the support of all classes of the Yugoslav people, irrespective of their religious beliefs—Orthodox, Catholic or Moslem.

The National Liberation Movement has united in the organization's rank and file, workers and peasants, officers and soldiers, engineers, lawyers, doctors of medicine, professors, school-teachers and clergymen. Here we find names known to the whole country. In particular we see that of Nuriya Pozderatz, former senator and one of the leaders of the Yugoslav Moslem organization; Pavle Savich, professor of Belgrade University; Mile Balaban, former deputy of the Agrarian Party; Pavao Krtze, deputy of the Croat Peasant Party; Prof. Edward Kotzbek, Catholic writer from Slovenia and Commissioner for Education of the Provisional National Government; Vladimir Nazor, Croat poet. These men, for almost two years, together with the fighters of the Liberation Army, struggled for the National Liberation of their country. In addition to the Italian "Garibaldi" division, a Czechoslovak shock battalion, the Hungarian "Shandor Petoeffi" battalion, German, Austrian and Bulgarian anti-fascist units there are Britishers, New Zealanders, Frenchmen and Russians, former war prisoners, fighting within the ranks of the Liberation Army.

The territory occupied by the Army of Liberation increases steadily in accordance with the tactical and strategical condition of the struggle. However, throughout the two years' fight for liberation, there has always been a large number of populated villages and towns in the hands of the Liberation Army. Thus at the end of 1942 the Liberation Army and Partisans held more than 50 towns and about 50,000 square kilometres of territory. By the beginning of September, 1943, they controlled over 70,000 square kilometres, a size of territory which exceeds that of Switzerland.

In all the towns cultural centres are opened, where the aims of the fight for national liberation are explained and where lectures and reports on the subjects of mobilization, unity and organization of the great popular masses in the struggle against the German-Italian invaders, are held. Children who have lost their parents are placed in children's homes at a distance from the scene of operations. Hospitals are opened for the wounded, and these are run by doctors who have voluntarily offered their services to the Partisan Army. Among them are well-known figures in the medical world,

such as the Professor of the Faculty of Medicine, Miloshevich,\* the surgeon Bozhovich, Army Doctor Nikolich and others.

In the liberated and occupied areas many newspapers, reviews and information bulletins are published. In a number of liberated towns, exhibitions of the Partisan press have been held which were enormously successful with the local population. The *Partisan* and *Borba* (Fight), both of which appear weekly, are the principal publications.

In Slovenia a Liberty Loan has been raised to finance the liberation struggle, and it has had great success not only in the freed, but also in the occupied areas.

The successes achieved by the Yugoslav Partisans have been realized at the cost of enormous sacrifices, because the invaders seek by methods dear to them to stifle the liberation struggle. Fascist planes bomb areas in the freed territories. On Zhablyak alone, a small Montenegrin town, German planes dropped on the 20th May last, 20,000 kilograms of bombs. The occupationists have executed hundreds of hostages in the towns. In April last they published a decree according to which the families and relatives of Partisans were declared hostages. Through these bestial methods the Hitlerians seek to stop the flow of volunteers, but no Fascist invention has been able to stop the growth of the national liberation movement.

According to a decision of May 1st, 1943, by the High Command of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments, broadcast by the Radio Station "Free Yugoslavia" on September 10th, 1943, officers' ranks have been introduced into the Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments. On the basis of this decision the re-organization has been carried out and five thousand fighters have been promoted to officers. Official rank has been awarded to those men who in the course of two years' bitter fighting for freedom have distinguished themselves by their courage and ability to command.

The following were promoted to Generals of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia :

Colonel of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Savo Orovich, member of the High Command of the National Liberation Army; Captain of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Arso Yovanovich, Chief of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army; Colonel of the former Yugoslav Royal Army Yosif Shkorpik, Chief of Staff of the Fourth Dalmatian zone; General-Staff Colonel of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Yakov Avshich, Chief of Staff of the National Liberation Army

\* Professor Miloshevich was recently murdered by Mihailovich's Chetniks.

in Slovenia; Major of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Voyislav Djokich, Chief of Staff of the 7th Division of the National Liberation Army; Petar Dapchevich, ex-International Brigadier in Spain, now Commander of the Second Division of the National Liberation Army; Kocho Popovich, Commander of the First Division of the National Liberation Army; Kosta Nadj, ex-International Brigadier in Spain, now Commander of the First Bosnian Corps; Lieut.-Colonel of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Veko Bulatovich; Lieut.-Colonel of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Mihailo Andjelich; Ivan Goshnyak, ex-International Brigadier in Spain, Commander of the Croatian Corps of the National Liberation Army.

The following were promoted to the ranks of Colonels of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia:

Major of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Branko Polyanatz, Commander of the Fourth Division; Danilo Lekich, Commander of the 16th Division; Gligo Mandich, Commander of the 17th Division; Milutin Moracha, Commander of the Fifth Division; Captain of the former Royal Yugoslav Army Velimir Terzich; Pavle Ilich; Dr. Goyko Nikolic, Secretary of the Medical Service of the National Liberation Army.

The following were honoured posthumously as national heroes:

Niko Marakovich, Commander of the Seventh Bayina Brigade and Savo Kovachevich, Commander of the Fifth Herzegovinian Brigade. The latter by their heroic death helped to smash the fifth fascist offensive in June, 1943, and made it possible to break through the ring of the German, Italian, Bulgarian and Ustashi troops around the National Liberation Army in Montenegro, Hertzegovina and Sandzhak.

Yefto Boshnyak, Rade Konchar, Mile Lechava, Savo Kovachevich and Dr. Mladen Stoyanovich were earlier declared national heroes.

*In connection with the above promotions it is necessary to point out that on July 3rd, 1942, the Royal Yugoslav Government black-listed as military deserters—guilty of breach of military oath and betrayal of the King and the people the following among the above named officers: Col. Orovich, Col. Avshich, Lt.-Col. Bulatovich, Major Polyanatz, Captain Yovanovich, Captain Terzich, as well as the late Captain Petar Chetkovich, Commander of the First Montenegrin Division of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army.*

In the middle of October a spectacular event took place in the liberated parts of Slovenia. There the first public trial of war criminals was held in German-occupied Europe. Seventeen officers of the Quisling White Guards of General Mihailovich

were sentenced to death by a tribunal, composed of two high judges of Slovenia, two officers of the Liberation Army and a Partisan, on the charge of collaborating with the enemy against the Yugoslav Liberation Army. The sentences were carried out immediately.

## YUGOSLAV GUERILLAS IN LONDON

AMONG the first to bring direct information about the real position of popular armed resistance in Yugoslavia were three guerillas who fought in Serbia and Bosnia from July, 1941, till March, 1942. They were captured and driven by the Germans to forced labour to Norway, from where they succeeded in escaping to London in May, 1943.

*Novak Gayich*, shoemaker, from Bayina Bashta, South-Western part of Serbia, has taken part in the great national uprising which broke out in Serbia in June 1941. In the course of the next five months a large part of Serbia, including the towns of Gornji Milanovatz, Chachak and Uzhitze, was freed. Gayich described how democratic power was organized in these liberated regions and how men and women from all democratic parties and social classes participated in it. He said that the Partisans in Uzhitze re-established production in the local arms factory, in the power-station and textile factory; women throughout the liberated territories made clothes for the people's army; cultural committees published the paper, *The Fight*, as well as news-bulletins and organized lectures and dramatic performances.

Finally, Gayich revealed many important details about the activities of General Mihailovich. He explained that the High Command of the Partisan Detachments had negotiated with General Mihailovich to reach agreement on joint military operations. Mihailovich had several times accepted the agreement which he immediately broke on the terrain till he finally took sides openly with Quisling Nedich and the Germans in October, 1941.

*Muharem Arslanagich*, a Moslem from Hertzegovina, was custom official in Golubatz on the Danube on the Yugoslav-Rumanian border. He participated for nine months in the fighting against the occupationists and Quislings in purely Serbian regions, in Partisan Detachments whose members were nearly all Serbians. He is a living proof that there is no mortal hatred between the Moslems and the Serbs, as is being claimed by the Germans and Yugoslav fascists. Arslanagich's detachment was engaged in the course of autumn, 1941, in sabotaging the German food export from the rich plain of Stig and copper from the biggest copper mines in Europe, Bor and Maydanpek.

The railway traffic was completely stopped in Eastern Serbia and on several occasions the Partisans reached the Danube and stopped ships loaded with German material.

*Dragomir Popovich*, a Serb from Rogatitza in Eastern Bosnia, was by profession a village carpenter. When in June, 1941, the Serb peasants, in order to escape the massacres initiated by the Ustashis, fled to the forests and started the fight for freedom, Popovich together with his father joined a Chetnik unit of Bosnian peasants. These peasant Chetniks courageously fought the Germans and the Ustashis and collaborated with the Partisans till they clashed with Major Yezdimir Dangich, one of Mihailovich's right-hand men, who attempted to impose himself as their commander. When Mihailovich reached an agreement with the Germans, Dangich started to give orders to his Chetniks to give up the fight against the Germans and to attack the Partisans. The majority of the peasant Chetniks, however, refused to carry out this order and went over to the patriots. Among them was Popovich. Dangich together with a small number of traitors then placed himself at the service of the Germans.

Soon after these events, in spring, 1942, the National Liberation Army came into being; it was made up of the Partisan Detachments and of many Chetniks who had abandoned their traitor leaders as well as of large numbers of Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, Moslems and Slovenes who up to that time had not taken part in the fighting.

# THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

DURING the autumn of 1942, a whole series of congresses were organized on the liberated territory of Yugoslavia: a Women's Congress, Youth Congress, Physicians' Congress and Priests' Congress. In all these Congresses decisions were taken about the organization of liberated territory and the support to be given to the military operations of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments.

The most important meeting was the Conference of delegates from all parts of the country, which took place in Bihach, Bosnia, on November 26th, 1942. At this Conference the delegates compiled the programme of the National Liberation Movement, and elected the Anti-fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, which consisted of 65 members. Dr. Ivan Ribar, the former President of the Yugoslav Constituent Assembly was elected head of the Executive Council.

In this Anti-fascist Council the provinces were represented as follows:—

Fifteen from Serbia, 15 from Montenegro, 13 from Croatia, 17 from Bosnia and Hertzegovina, five from Sandzhak and two from Vovvodina.

In the Anti-fascist Council the national groups were represented as follows:—

Thirty-five Serbs, 15 Montenegrins, 13 Croats, four Moslems and one Jew.

In the Anti-fascist Council the professions were represented as follows:—

Forty-six intellectuals (six barristers, six professors, four doctors, one engineer, five priests, three teachers, four writers, five journalists, three officers), 16 peasants and four workers.

The above figures show most clearly that in the Anti-fascist Council for National Liberation all old privileges of individual peoples and provinces have been abolished. As a standard in the elections the Serbs have not been taken as a dominating nation with priority over others but the elections have been conducted upon the basis of relation of forces which have been behind the elected representatives at that time and upon the results attained.

Due to unsurmountable difficulties in travelling Slovene representatives were unable to attend the Conference. Later, however, two prominent Slovene intellectuals from the Slovene fighting organization—Liberation Front—were appointed as members of the Executive Committee of the Council.

On February 11th, 1943, the clandestine radio station "Free Yugoslavia" broadcasted the following statement:

"In view of the fact that the occupationist forces, Ustashis, and Mihailovich's Chetniks are ceaselessly and by various means spreading slander and false information about the National Liberation Movement and its aims, we deem it necessary to make the following statement:

"The National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia, under the leadership of the High Command of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia and the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, is a national movement involving the participation of all honest patriots, regardless of political party affiliation, religion or nationality. This movement has as its aims:

"(1) The liberation of the country from the occupationist forces and winning the independence and truly democratic rights and liberties by all people of Yugoslavia.

"(2) The inviolability of private property, full opportunity for initiative in industry and economic field.

"(3) No radical changes to be introduced in the social life and activities, with the exception of replacing the reactionary district administrations and gendarmes by elected national institutions of a truly democratic people's character. All important measures in social life and State organization to be decided after the war by representatives truly and freely elected by the people.

"(4) The National Liberation Movement, fighting for the freedom of the people, for social and democratic rights, is alien to every form of violence and lawlessness.

"(5) Officers joining the National Army are guaranteed their ranks and positions in accordance with their abilities.

"(6) The National Liberation Movement accords full recognition of national rights to Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, as well as to the Macedonians and others. This movement is alike in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, and therefore constitutes a guarantee that the national rights of all the peoples of Yugoslavia will be won.

"On behalf of the High Command of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, Commander-in-Chief Tito.

"On behalf of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, President, Ribar."



Corresponding to the intensification and the tremendous growth of the struggle in Croatia an All-Croatian Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation has been established within the framework of the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia in the liberated town of Otochatz on June 14th, 1943, headed by Vladimír Nazor, the greatest Croatian living poet, consisting of representatives of political parties.

On the liberated territory of Slovenia national elections were held in September of this year, in which all men and women over seventeen were allowed to vote. Eighty per cent. of the electors with the right to vote took part in the elections. The first Congress of the Deputies of the Slovene people was held from October 1st to 3rd and was attended by 572 deputies and more than eighty members of different delegations. Dr. Ivan Ribar, Chairman of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, and a representative of the British Military Mission at the headquarters of the National Liberation Army of Slovenia, were also present. The Congress elected a Slovene National Liberation Committee composed of 120 persons and an Executive Committee of ten, headed by Joseph Vidmar, a dramatist and former Secretary of the PEN Club in Lyublyana. A delegation of forty was also elected by the Congress and sent to the central body, the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia.

Corresponding to the new stage of development in the relation of forces and the specific conditions arising out of the general political situation, the Anti-fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia has on its first anniversary re-organized and transformed itself into a Provisional Legislative Council, composed of delegates from the Provincial Committees. The National Liberation Committee headed by Marshal Tito is subordinated to the Legislative Council and has all the powers of a Provisional Government. All national groups are represented on the broadest democratic basis.

The second article of a recent decision of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia envisages the contours of the future Yugoslav state as follows: "In order to carry out the principles of sovereignty of the peoples of Yugoslavia, in order that Yugoslavia be the real home for all of its people, and in order that it may no longer become an arena for the machinations of various reactionary influences, Yugoslavia is being built up on a federative principle which will ensure the full equality for the peoples of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Sandzhak, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In all towns and villages on the liberated territory National Liberation Committees were formed, freely elected by the

people, and secret committees were formed in places under enemy or Quisling domination.

Those Committees are in no way Soviets or Soviet republics, as it is being claimed by Axis propagandists and the die-hard enemies of the National Liberation Movement, but rather the simplest expression of democratic national traditions. In democratic Serbia, as it was before the introduction of dictatorship, there existed elected municipal, district and provincial committees which were conducting the administration of their respective territory. The fascist dictatorship removed those committees and handed over all power to its own police commissars and gendarmes. The National Liberation Movement deemed it quite natural to return at once to the national democratic traditions.

The question of the National Liberation Committees, as organs of civil authority, was one of the central issues of argument between the National Liberation Movement and Mihailovich. The district administrations and the gendarmes, as we have stressed before, were appointed by previous fascist dictatorial regimes with the aim of stemming the national and democratic advance of the people. They were permeated by fifth-column elements who formed the backbone of the German-controlled Quisling administrations which claimed to act "in the interest of the State." In the light of these facts the National Liberation Movement deemed the removal of these undemocratic institutions indispensable, and their replacement by National Liberation Committees, essential for the total mobilization of all anti-fascist and democratic forces in the fight against the fascist invaders and their Quislings. While negotiating with the National Liberation Movement in September and October of 1941 Mihailovich categorically rejected these proposals and insisted on maintaining the old fascist-appointed institutions on the ground that the establishment of the National Liberation Committees was diametrically opposed to "the basic interests of the State" which he claimed the exclusive right to represent. He also wanted to carry out forcible mobilization for his troops on the territory freed by the partisans.

His lust for power manifested itself for the first but not the last time in the proclamation which he issued from his mountain headquarters on November 16th, 1941, after his initial forces were routed in the first major clash with the partisans when he stabbed them in the back. Thereupon King Peter II "on the proposal of the free Yugoslav Government" confirmed him "as the Commander of the entire Yugoslav military force on the occupied territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia." In this proclamation he pathetically appeals to

the nations of Yugoslavia as *his* people and whenever he is referring to the successes of the partisans baptizes them as "the regular army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia," calling them "*my troops*."

The explanation of this phenomenon lies beyond the contemporary conception of individualism. It is a deeply-rooted inherent feeling of supremacy over the people engendered in the Middle Ages by the Turkish-bred feudal landowners—the Pashas and Begs—who looked upon the Serbian peasants as their *raya*, personal property or merchandise to be bought or sold.

Is it not a remarkable coincidence that these traces of the surviving spiritual emanations of the feudal system of State express themselves in a proclamation designed to reinstate the authority of the former Yugoslav State immediately after its doom is already assured? It is precisely on the issue of the National Liberation Committees that Mihailovich's true role is revealed. As "a national legendary hero" delivering his people from foreign and domestic oppression as the genuine Serbian national leaders have done in their glorious history he vanishes. *Henceforward he becomes the personification of the past 23 years of national and social oppression, the ugly-headed Cerberus of the political status quo of the old ruling oligarchy.*

Democracy means the Government of the people, by the people and for the people, and we can rightly say that the political foundations of the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia are based upon true democratic principles.

First, all nationalities are represented with completely equal rights, without any discrimination or lawlessness.

Second, all social strata and classes are represented.

Third, all religious beliefs on the principle of absolute equality and complete freedom of religion are represented.

Fourth, everyone is given the opportunity to co-operate in the liberation of their country and their people.

Fifth, everyone is given the opportunity of initiative in industry and economic field. This means that the right of private ownership is guaranteed. This further means, that there is no alienation or appropriation of large estates or factories as such radical social changes and reforms are left to be decided after the complete national liberation of the country when the free peoples in a free country will by their free decisions have their say as to the future form of State and Government. To-day the National Liberation Movement cannot think of intimidating anyone by the force of arms or of compelling anyone to choose one or another form of Government or social system.

Those who agree with democratic principles must agree

that under existing circumstances the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement guarantees the largest possible measure of democratic rights. Those who are against such a democracy are in reality such people as place their personal or sectional interests before the national welfare; who on whatever pretence are still a grist to the Axis mill. At least, that is the only logical conclusion that we can draw from numerous examples where Axis opinions or those inspired by the Axis are held authoritative in relation to the political issues involved in the National Liberation Movement.

In the course of the national liberation struggle of the nations of Yugoslavia tremendous forces, foiled or stifled throughout the centuries by the yoke of mediaeval feudalism, have been brought to the surface and found a mighty expression in the liberation movement.

What is, e.g., the position of Yugoslav women to-day in relation to the National Liberation struggle? One can say with absolute certainty that never have women in the whole history of Southern Slavs risen to such a height as in the present war for national liberation. Women are commanders in Partisan Detachments; as a soldier she is fighting shoulder to shoulder with her brother or husband; she is a delegate of the people in the Anti-Fascist Assembly; she displays the same heroism in the hard struggle against the fascist invaders as the greatest heroes of the male sex; she is taking part in all the affairs of the people and no discrimination is made against her as in pre-war Yugoslavia where women were regarded as minors for their whole life. What the women of Yugoslavia could not accomplish during the last hundred years, i.e., the winning of equal rights with men, they have attained in the course of these few years of struggle for the liberation of their country.

These facts will enable us to conceive the tremendous progress and achievements which have been made in the course of the sacred national liberation struggle, in which the women of Yugoslavia have broken for ever the fetters of these remnants of mediaeval feudalism and even those which date back to the ages of slavery.

The national movements in the Balkans started as we have seen at the beginning of the 19th-century. They arose out of the struggles of new productive forces to liberate themselves from the shackles of the obsolete feudal relations which had prevailed under the Empire of the Turkish Sultans. These movements found expression in a series of national uprisings and wars, which gradually broke the political power of the Turkish Begs and Pashas, liberated the peasants, and resulted in the formation of the independent Balkan states. But at

the same time they were inspired and supported by interested foreign Powers which were pursuing aims of imperialist conquest in the Balkans. These movements subsequently always became the blind instruments of the policy of imperialist conquest of one or another great European Power.

From this historical viewpoint the present National Liberation Movement has opened up an entirely new era in the history of the Yugoslav peoples for it is the first movement in the history of the Southern Slavs which has brought about the true unity of brotherly nations in the struggle against the common enemy. At the same time it laid down the foundations for the free self-determination of all these nations with regard to their future State and social life.

There have already been many attempts in the history of Southern Slavs to draw them into common action with the purpose of setting up united States. The results of such endeavours were always none or insignificant. Finally, the unification into a single State came in 1918. The union, however, has been translated into life in the course of twenty-three years in such a way that the various peoples inhabiting Yugoslavia have increasingly separated from one another instead of approaching each other.

At Bihach a new movement of unity has begun to spring from the ruins of the former self-proclaimed national unity and the Yugoslav State. This unity is not merely the fruit of declarations and phrases in the past, but a unity forged in the fierce struggles against occupationists and their hirelings. This unity has not been imposed from above but it has sprung from the strivings of the whole people when brother was looking for brother in the hardest heroic ordeal, when Serb embraced every Croat, Moslem and Slovene only if they were willing to fight against the invaders. The Croat who rose to fight against Hitler, Mussolini, Pavelich and Nedich joined hands with the Serb who would go with him and put aside and forget everything that the Great-Serbs had been doing against the Croats for twenty-three years.

The struggle has proved that the unification of all national-democratic forces is possible. Those Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Slovenian, Bosnian and Macedonian brigades, divisions and corps which have been fighting under the command of the National Liberation Army are an indisputable proof that unity is not merely possible but has been cemented and sealed in common blood in spite of all Machiavellian machinations of Pavelich, Nedich and Mihailovich who tried to create confusion and incite bloodstrife and internecine feud between the Serbs and the Croats.

The Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation at Bihach

as well as all other Conferences and Congresses were not the last word at the end of an historical era. We found therein no decision concerning the future State or social system of Yugoslavia but only the foundations have been laid down indicating the way the work of the liberation of the country should be carried out. The manner in which the machinery of this newly born movement is functioning in the Army, in the rear and in the liberated territories, is a sure sign as to the way many questions will be solved after the complete liberation of the country.

The principal driving force of this new nation-wide movement lies, on one hand, in those nations whose national and politico-economic development have gradually outgrown the basic economical and political form of the former Yugoslav State which had become a fetter upon further development. On the other hand, it lies in those peoples which have hitherto been dormant within the womb of historical development. Thus, the national and social forces, which have languished for centuries, are at this stage released and brought to new life by the struggle against the most ruthless fascist oppression and exploitation. They have attained sufficient strength to assert themselves, to attain an increasing national and social-consciousness, and, by throwing off the obsolete shackles of the past, have merged into one gigantic and irrepressible historical movement, whose penetrating force has assumed precedent-shattering dimensions among the broadest sections of the nations of Yugoslavia. Herein lies its inexhaustible strength, and its invincibility. The expression of the resultant fighting forces is their indestructible fighting unity, forged in the fire of the common struggle and steeled in the most fateful ordeals in the history of the nations of Yugoslavia. Their struggle will grow, develop, and finally merge with the rising tidal waves of the fight of all the Balkan nations for national emancipation and the democratic rights and liberties, thus creating the first essential conditions for further economical, political and cultural progress on the part of all the peoples and nations of the Balkans.